

T-475

Late 17th-Early 18th centuries

Doncaster Archeological Site (Wyetown)
Bruffs Island Road
Copperville
Private

Doncaster was located on one of the earliest land grants in Talbot County, surveyed on October 18, 1658. The early port location was ideal for shipping. Protected from the sometimes tempestuous Eastern Bay by Bennett's Point, the site was safe harbor even during severe storms, at which time ships could take shelter behind Bruff's Island in Shaw Bay, which was once 15-20 feet deep. A spit community has connected Bruff Island to the mainland and Shaw Bay has silted considerably. Direct stimulus for the creation of a town at this location came from the passage in 1683 of an act which called for the establishment of towns and ports throughout the new colony. While records hint of possible town lands already in existence, the town was formally laid out in 1684. The act required the establishment of a commission whose responsibility was to purchase the necessary quantity of land at the selected location, have it surveyed and divided into lots, and mark and number the lots. Each town was to cover 100 acres, and lots were to be 1 acre each. Streets, lanes, and alleys were to be laid out and designated, and open places to be left for erecting a church, chapel, market house and other public buildings. The county records show that a tobacco tax was levied to pay workmen on the project which was completed in 1684. Archeological deposits have been recorded in 1961.

The Doncaster Historic Town site is the location of the first Roman Catholic Church erected on the Eastern Shore of Maryland. The site of the town was one of the first land grants on the Eastern Shore and the town, erected in 1684, was one of the first planned towns in Maryland. The site was an early seat of commerce and may have been the second largest port on the Eastern Shore during the final decades of the 17th century. At its peak Doncaster would have contained inns, a chapel, warehouses, a ferry, stores, stocks and a whipping post, a public square, and a number of residences. Doncaster was a contender for the location of the Talbot County seat. The town's failure to procure that honor led to its eventual demise. A plat of the 1707 extension of the town provides a guide for the location of at least five residences which were occupied before 1707. The older section of Doncaster is presently covered by a secondary forest, which have helped preserve the site. As no above-ground structures remain, our knowledge of the plan of the 1684 section of the time must be derived from the archeological data unless new documented sources are uncovered.



Doncaster Town Site

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